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**THESE DAYS:**

## Tossing Restraint To the Winds

By JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

**H**OW MANY TIMES in a lifetime does one have to to say, "This is where I came in?"

It seems only yesterday (though actually it was some 30 years ago) that a venerable socialist organization, the League for Industrial Democracy, was sponsoring a youth group called the National Student Union. This youth group, though Marxist, was supposed to keep within the bounds of legal protest and parliamentary action, for its parent, known far and wide in the radical movement by its initials as the LID, believed in orderly, or non-Leninist, change. In the late '30s, however, the National Student Union began a dalliance with Leninist direct-action tactics. The LID dropped it like a hot potato. For a time it was taken up, in all innocence, by Eleanor Roosevelt, but she, in turn, edged away from it. And during the great stress of World War II the National Student Union was deservedly forgotten.

The old LID managed to struggle along with no effective youth movement until a few years ago, when it decided to punch up its "student department" as Students for a Democratic Society. This SDS grew rapidly as the civil-rights movement caught the imagination of young people on the campuses. Soon there were 60 chapters, with projects for leadership training institutes and trips to Mississippi.

But history was about to repeat itself. Last June, at its Michigan conference, the SDS did the sort of thing the old National Student Union had done in the late '30s: It made a decision to be "activist" even if it involved getting heads broken in illegal scuffles



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with the police or interfering with the progress of the war in Viet Nam. And it decided to strike out opposition to communism as such from its membership cards.

ALL OF THIS provoked a crisis with its parent body, the old LID. But this time the LID directorate and national council reacted in a namby-pamby way toward its obstreperous offspring. Where, in the late '30s, it had cut all connections with the National Student Union for getting cozy with the Communists, this time it merely passed a resolution calling for a "dialogue" on the real meaning of the word "democracy."

Thus, in the words of some of the LID dissidents who think the students' organization should be disciplined for going over to "Leninist" tactics, the venerable LID, supporter of legal Social Democratic means of change for over a half century, has "marched up the hill and marched down again" on an issue that cuts close to its very reason for being.

The crisis in the LID has provoked a lot of internal clucking. A faculty sponsor of Students for a Democratic Society, who wishes his name withheld until he sees what action the LID will finally take, has denounced the SDS for becoming part of the Maoist establishment in the United States while using the respectable LID name as a cover. Murray Baron, a labor relations adviser, who has been a member of the governing board of the LID, has quit in disgust. And there have been agitated memos sent to various board members and to Marx Lewis of the LID National Council, who, ironically, also happens to be a moving spirit in something that is known as the Council Against Communist Aggression.

This crisis in the LID has dangerous implications simply because the LID board of directors and national council are spangled with people who hold important positions in the AFL-CIO, in the universities, in such organizations as CORE, and in the Democratic Administration's anti-poverty program.

The LID has always repudiated Bolshevik and neo-anarchist methods. If it is now prepared to go along with a Maoist youth movement, some old and vitally important democratic restraints will have been thrown to the winds.

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